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flip side.

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WHEN A NEW YORK COUPLE WHO HAD BEEN RENTING A WINTER ESCAPE IN PALM BEACH ULTIMATELY DECIDED TO BUY A PLACE THERE, THEY SETTLED ON A PENTHOUSE CONDO RIGHT ON THE WATER. Their new getaway had one of the best vantage points in the area, but, unfortunately, it also had one major drawback. Those possible jaw-dropping vistas of the sparkling ocean beyond were practically nonexistent from inside the home.

INTERIOR DESIGN Blair Harris, Blair Harris Interior Design

ARCHITECTURE Daniel Menard and Oscar Benavides, LaBerge & Menard Inc.

HOME BUILDER Paul Maloney, Woolems, Inc.

BEDROOMS 3 **BATHROOMS** 4 **SQUARE FEET** 2,800







LIGHT LUNCH

Whispers of amethyst in the dining room visually connect the space to the adjacent living area. An expandable dining table, by Jiun Ho from Dennis Miller Associates in New York, is paired with chairs by Clodagh upholstered in vinyl. The glass bubble fixture was custom designed by jGoodDesign, also in New York.



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Case in point: The condo's ocean-facing walls—where the bedrooms and closets were situated—were solid, with a grave deficiency of windows. The common living areas hadn't fared much better, as they were sequestered in the center of the residence. To top off the perplexing layout, the mid-1960s condo had not been renovated or redecorated in decades and was overrun with outdated styling that did not satiate the homeowners' desires.

"They wanted a place where their kids and grandchildren could come down for the holidays," says designer Blair Harris, who had previously worked on the couple's primary residence in Manhattan. Their New York apartment is much more traditional, so for this home, they wanted something a little more modern."

GLOSS AND FOUND

Artistry Masters of Woodcraft created high-gloss cabinets with minimal hardware for the newly relocated kitchen, which now lets in plenty of light. Reno's Marble & Granite fabricated the lustrous granite countertops. The pendant lights, by Sonneman, are from MSK Illuminations in New York.



CONTEMPORARY CABANA

For the homeowners' poolside cabana, the team used Calacatta gold marble and a wave-patterned ceramic tile, from Nemo Tile Company in New York, to echo the penthouse's modern sensibility. The banquette cushion is covered in Perennials fabric from David Sutherland.



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Transforming the condo into a sleek, spacious oasis would prove to be an ambitious task. “It was a maze of little rooms with low ceilings and a lot of hallways that cranked in every direction—space that was wasted,” says architect Daniel Menard, who, along with his associate Oscar Benavides, was hired to reshape the interior of the home. “The main ocean view was blocked by a closet with no windows,” recalls Menard. “It’s a mystery to me why anyone would want to ignore the Atlantic Ocean.”

Menard drew up plans that would completely flip the layout, moving the bedrooms to the interior of the condo and the kitchen and living areas to its perimeter, along which windows would be added to afford panoramic ocean vistas. The homeowners loved the idea, but Menard had a battle ahead of him. “We had to get clearance from the condo board, the town and even the original architect, but we managed to get permission to open the view.” Menard remembers with clarity when the walls were opened to reveal the ocean beyond. “All of our jaws just dropped,” he says. “It’s probably one of the most panoramic views in all of Palm Beach.”



WOOD FOR THOUGHT

A custom desk made of black American walnut with copper alloy steel by Antoine Proulx offers a pared-down workspace. Walnut furnishings were used throughout the home to provide a warm contrast to the light color scheme. The polished-nickel task lamp is from Restoration Hardware.

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Once the condo's main attraction was finally set, Harris went about designing around it, making the interior décor the perfect supporting role to the true protagonist. "When you sit in the living room, you just see the water in front of you, so the main part of designing the space was incorporating that gorgeous expanse," she says.

Harris selected furnishings and finishes that would play up the condo's new airy feel. "I decided to keep everything simple with clean lines," Harris says. "We used light colors and a lot of solid fabrics to avoid distracting from the ocean view, which is the apartment's wow factor. Since we weren't using a lot of pattern, we incorporated some great textures. Almost all of the walls, for example, are a high-gloss Venetian plaster."





HIDDEN AGENDA

The study—awash with a palette of camel and cream—converts into a guest room courtesy of a Murphy bed that is built into custom shelving. The custom linen-upholstered sofa is by J&P Custom Upholstery in Long Island City, New York. The lacquer-and-walnut-frame dresser is by Mitchell Gold + Bob Williams.



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The ceilings were raised to give the condo a sense of grandeur, while some of the square footage that had been hogged by hallways was used to make the rooms more spacious. “We utilized every possible inch,” says Paul Maloney, who managed the project’s build. “We used built-ins, a Murphy bed and other space-saving elements so that the homeowners would have plentiful storage but could maximize their living space.”

So with the living area now in its rightful place, perched just above the now visible blue waters, it’s hard to imagine that it could ever have been otherwise. As Harris says, “When you’re sitting there, you don’t see the beach; you don’t see land. You just see the ocean, and you feel like you’re on a cruise ship.” **L**

LILAC DREAMS

The lady of the house wanted a master bedroom that was comfortable and romantic, with a touch of glamour. Mirrored nightstands, from Bungalow 5 in New York, add a bit of glitz, as does a Swarovski crystal starburst chandelier, custom made by Venfield in New York.



SIT IN

A club chair by J&P Custom Upholstery and a hammered polished-nickel table from Bloomingdale's offer an inviting lounging spot. Soft gray Venetian plaster, executed by Colonial Decorators, covers the walls. Floor-to-ceiling sheers let in just enough light.